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ABSTRACT

Following a decrease in minority student enrollment within the California Community Colleges (CCC), the Board of Governors (BOG) convened a special statewide symposium to examine issues of minority student enrollment, retention, and transfer, and established a standing Board Committee on Equity and Diversity. Over the past 2 years, a system policy on student equity has been under development and review, with participatory support from all elements in the CCC system. This report presents the proposed policy statement. The first two sections identify the reasons for strengthening existing student equity policies and programs, citing California's economic dependency on the successful education of its future workforce. The following section describes the ways in which the policy would be implemented, emphasizing the need for local planning and coordination based on existing, district-level student equity-related policies and programs. The final section emphasizes the importance of rigorous evaluation of systemwide progress within the context of BOG and district oversight. An appendix to the proposal suggests specific additions to existing educational legislation, providing definitions of "historically underrepresented groups" and "ethnic minorities," and requiring district development of a student equity plan for each college with specified components of campus-based research or needs assessment; goal identification; and specification of implementation activities, resources support, and evaluation. Additional appendixes identify "indicators" for assessing progress in achieving student equity; and systemwide activities supportive of planning and implementation efforts. (PAA)

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Board of Governors
California Community Colleges
July 9-10, 1992

STUDENT EQUITY POLICY 14

First Reading, Action Pending, September Board Meeting

Staff Presentation: *Gus Guichard, Interim Vice Chancellor*
Governmental Relations

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Background

A consistent theme in the Board of Governors basic agendas and other policy documents of the past several years has been the enhancement of underrepresented student access and success. This policy concern was raised to a heightened level as a result of the impact of first-time fees on the enrollment of low-income and minority group students. Following a report in spring 1985 on reductions in minority enrollment, the Board responded by convening a major, statewide "Symposium on the Enrollment, Retention, and Transfer of Minority Students." The efforts of the symposium resulted in the adoption by the Board, in 1986, of a major policy statement on the same subject.

Renewed Board concern for the status of underrepresented students was evidenced by the establishment in 1989 of a standing Board Committee on Equity and Diversity and in priority accorded this area in annual planning sessions of the Board. The most recent policy document, *The Basic Agenda: Policy Directions and Priorities for the Nineties*, continues an emphasis on increased retention and transfer of underrepresented students, broader provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) and basic skills instruction, and greater representation of such students in occupational education programs.

Paralleling this interest, the Board has encouraged the development of a system policy on student equity. That policy has been under development and review over the past two years in an effort to achieve participatory support from all elements in the system. This item presents the result of that process as a proposed policy for consideration by the Board.

Analysis

The proposed policy on student equity in the California Community Colleges is comprised of three prefatory sections leading to a proposed regulation in this area. The initial section identifies the reasons for strengthening existing student equity policies and programs, citing California's economic dependency on the successful education of its future workforce, among whom will be an ever-increasing percentage

of underrepresented students. It further recognizes the role the community colleges have played in providing access to ethnic minorities and disabled persons, but acknowledges that once these students have entered these institutions, their success rates lag behind those of other groups.

The statement of policy therefore supports the role that the colleges should play in rectifying this situation, defines student equity, and pledges the policy and fiscal support of the Board toward those efforts made by the districts to achieve success for underrepresented students. The remaining parts of this statement describe the ways in which the policy would be implemented, emphasizing the crucial need for local planning and coordination based on existing, district, student equity-related policies and programs. Lastly, the importance of rigorous evaluation is stressed within the context of Board and district oversight of systemwide progress.

The proposed regulation (Appendix A) requires district development of a student equity plan for each college with specified components of campus-based research or needs assessment, goal identification, and specification of implementation activities, resource support, and evaluation. These plans are encouraged to be developed with active participation of the full campus community, as well as pertinent groups external to the campus. Additionally, the regulations include proposed definitions of "historically underrepresented groups" and "ethnic minorities."

The concluding parts of this item consist of two further appendices. As assistance to the districts in their plan development, Appendix B provides definitions, or "indicators," for five terms crucial to assessing progress in achieving student equity: access, course completion, degree and certificate completion, ESL and basic skills completion, and transfer rate. Appendix C identifies systemwide activities supportive of district and system, planning and implementation efforts. These include development of a system student equity plan, review of pertinent statutes and regulations, exploration of options for additional fiscal support, and provision for technical assistance of various kinds. All of these activities are understood to be the responsibility of the Chancellor's Office, working in close consultation with the colleges.

This item is being presented to the Board for initial review and comment. A recommendation for action is anticipated for the Board's September meeting.

Staff Presentation: *Gus Guichard, Interim Vice Chancellor*
Governmental Relations

Student Equity Policy

The Need to Strengthen Student Equity Policies and Programs

No issue is more important to the future of California than increasing the enrollment and success of underrepresented ethnic minorities and individuals from other underrepresented groups. The risk if we fail is that the future of this state will see the development of:

> What has been called a "permanent underclass," mostly minority, and a semipermanent, semi-employable stratum of low-skilled workers. The consequences of this development would be dire: the permanent under-utilization of the energies and talents of our people, the deepening of racial resentments and fears, and the constant anxiety among more and more of us that the future has no place for us. [AB 1725, Section 1(g)]

There simply is no realistic alternative to making student equity the highest priority at the State and local levels.

California's community colleges spend millions of dollars and assign thousands of dedicated employees to providing services for ethnic minorities, high school dropouts, students with disabilities, women, and foreign immigrants. The report of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Master Plan, *California Faces. . . California's Future*, stated: "The California Community Colleges are the gateway to equity, providing access to top quality, lower-division transfer and vocational education. Their role as academic institutions of highest quality makes them the centerpiece of California's elaborate system of higher education." Indeed, community college enrollments already reflect the diversity of the state to a remarkable degree. In fall 1989, 39.5 percent of the 1.4 million enrolled students were from racial and ethnic groups other than White, 56.5 percent were women, and approximately four percent were persons with disabilities. These figures compare reasonably well with the projected composition of California's 1990 population: 40.7 percent minority, 50.6 percent women, and 10 percent persons with disabilities.

There exists, however, a general need on many college campuses to better coordinate planning, programs, and funding in order to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources. In addition, the challenge of maintaining accessible and high quality community colleges for California's increasingly diverse population is threatened by the State's shrinking tax resources available to support increasing student demand. Moreover, there is strong evidence that Latinos, the fastest growing ethnic minority in California, continue to experience much higher dropout rates among high school students than any other group and that both Latinos and African-American students matriculate from high school to community colleges to a

university at rates below their percentages in the general population. In 1988, for example, African-American and Latino students totaled 39 percent of all public high school students but only 26 percent of community college freshmen and 11 percent of the University of California and the California State University graduating classes that same year.

The higher education participation and graduation rates for underrepresented ethnic groups must come much closer, at a minimum, to the percentage of the group's adult population statewide. Community colleges must provide services and programs that give students the best possible opportunity to succeed. The role of community colleges as the institutions of "first resort" for most postsecondary students, and particularly ethnic minorities, and the increasing importance of postsecondary training and skill development to California's continued economic growth, require that the community colleges establish as a top priority the strengthening of student equity in admission and retention policies and programs, and throughout every aspect of the institution.

Policy Statement on Student Equity

The Board of Governors strongly believes that the California Community Colleges and the State of California share an important role and common interest in successfully serving the educational needs of all residents of the state who seek higher education, regardless of their social, educational, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds. Toward this important end, the Board of Governors reaffirms its belief that all students who can benefit from the education programs and services of California's community colleges should be provided the necessary services and support to achieve their educational goals. The Board believes that student equity is achieved when the composition of students who enroll, are retained, transfer, or achieve their occupational goals mirrors the diversity in the state's adult population. In order to ensure that all underrepresented students, without regard to their diversity of backgrounds and skill levels, have the opportunity to achieve their educational goals on a par with other students, the Board continues its commitment to providing necessary coordination and support to the local colleges. The Board also commits to seeking the financial resources necessary for the local districts to achieve this vital goal.

Implementation Strategy for the Student Equity Policy

The Board of Governors recognizes that success in promoting student equity in the California Community Colleges will only occur if the local districts and their campuses are successful. Toward that end, the Board of Governors is asking each local board of trustees to support this policy by developing and adopting the best possible student equity plan. A well-developed plan provides the opportunity to review and coordinate what is currently being done; to examine every policy or

practice, including curriculum and student support services, for the possibility it constitutes an institutional barrier to student equity or, at least, with change, could more effectively foster student success; and finally, to determine specifically what needs to be done. Most important of all, the plan can serve to focus the attention of the faculty and staff on this goal.

It is the intention of the Board of Governors to adopt the most effective possible policies to promote student equity and student success. The Board believes the state will be best served if local districts develop and adopt plans that are tailored to the particular characteristics of each college's student population, best fit the particular college's traditions and organizational structure, and have the maximum support from the college's faculty and staff. There is no stronger justification for the Board's intention of relying on locally developed plans than the record of what has already been accomplished in this important area.

Therefore, the Board does not intend to mandate specific levels of achievement nor specific programs or activities. Rather, the Board is proposing, within its regulatory authority, that districts develop a student equity plan, utilizing the shared governance process as proposed in Appendix A. This regulation will assist districts with the process of developing the plans and provide guidelines for basic elements of the plans. Furthermore, the regulation will strengthen the partnership between the Board of Governors and local districts working together toward achievement of student equity goals by linking the goals and efforts of the local districts to that of the Board of Governors. The commitment of faculty, staff, trustees, the Board of Governors, and the Chancellor's Office must be united if success is to be achieved. In order to offer further assistance and coordination, the Board is also initiating various activities and discussions at the system level (Appendix C).

Evaluation: An Important Element of Equity

One essential element to attaining student equity is evaluation of efforts at the colleges in terms of data collection and analysis, as well as through subjective observations from professional staff. The proposed regulation includes evaluation as one of the required elements of local plans. The Board asks each district board of trustees to develop the most meaningful and effective method of evaluation possible and submit those reports annually to the Chancellor's Office. The Board has also initiated a process that will lead to the definition of the elements necessary for collecting data statewide on progress toward student equity. Until that process is completed, the Board is providing guidance to assist districts in the use of applicable definitions (Appendix B).

In addition, the Chancellor shall report annually to the Board on the progress in implementing this policy. The first report should be made by July 1, 1994, and should include a list of districts that have completed their local plans and districts, if any, that have not. The Board, at this time, is not establishing any specific

consequences for not doing a student equity plan, nor is it establishing standards of quality for such plans. However, the Board is committed to adopting the regulations and policies necessary to attain the maximum rate of student success and to attain student equity and will consider more prescriptive regulations, if they appear necessary, when it receives its annual report.

APPENDIX A

Subchapter 4 (commencing with Section 54220) is added to Division 6 of Title 5 of the *California Code of Regulations* to read:

Subchapter 4. Student Equity

54220. Student Equity Plans.

(a) In order to promote student success for all students, the governing board of each community college district shall adopt, by July 1, 1993, a student equity plan which includes for each college in the district:

(1) Campus-based research as to the extent of student equity and as to institutional barriers to equity in order to provide a basis for the development of goals and the determination of what activities are most likely to be effective;

(2) Goals for access, retention, degree and certificate completion, ESL and basic skills completion, and transfer; for each of the historically underrepresented groups as appropriate;

(3) Implementation activities designed to attain the goals, including a means of coordinating existing student equity related programs;

(4) Sources of funds for the activities in the plan;

(5) Schedule and process for evaluation; and

(6) An executive summary that includes, at a minimum, the groups for whom goals have been set, the goals, the initiatives that the college or district will undertake to achieve these goals, the resources that have been budgeted for that purpose, and the district official to contact for further information.

(b) These plans should be developed with the active involvement of all groups on campus as required by law, and with the involvement of appropriate people from the community who can articulate the perspective and concerns of the historically underrepresented groups.

(c) The Board-adopted plan shall be submitted to the Office of the Chancellor, which shall publish all executive summaries, sending copies to every college and district, the chair of each consultation group that so requests, and such additional individuals and organizations as deemed appropriate.

(d) Definitions. For purposes of this section the following definitions will apply:

(1) Historically Underrepresented Group. "Historically underrepresented group" means any group for which the percentage of persons from that group who enroll and complete their educational goals is now, and historically has been, significantly lower than the percentage that members of that group represent in the adult population of the state. The Board of Governors has determined that, on a statewide basis, ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities are historically underrepresented groups.

(2) Ethnic Minorities. "Ethnic minorities" means American Indians or Alaskan natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks and Hispanics. A person shall be included in the group with which he or she identifies as his or her group, but may be

counted in only one ethnic group. These groups shall be more specifically defined by the Chancellor consistent with state and federal law.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 66010.2, 66010.7, 66030, and 70901, Education Code.

APPENDIX B

Guidelines for the Development of Student Equity Plan Definitions

The Board of Governors recognizes that the development of effective student equity plans depends on the use of commonly accepted definitions of indicators that are consistent with the Chancellor's Office Management Information System, the Matriculation Program research requirements, the Accountability Indicators Report required by AB 1725, the National Higher Education Goals Process, the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act reporting requirements. Until such time as the Board adopts such definitions, it recommends consideration of the following definitions.

It is intended that the indicators listed below be developed for the overall district, and for age, gender, ethnicity, and disability groups of students as they are defined in the Chancellor's Office Management Information System. Districts should strive to make the indicators useful by validating and analyzing the indicators, along with other local measures of program effectiveness, including the satisfaction of all stakeholders (faculty, administrators, students, and trustees).

Recommended Student Equity Indicators

1. *Access.* Compare the percentage of each group that is enrolled to the percentage of each group in the adult population within the community served.

2. *Course completion.* The ratio of the number of courses that students actually complete by the end of the term to the number of courses in which students are enrolled on the census day of the term.

3. *Degree and certificate completion.* The ratio of the number of students who receive a degree or certificate to the number of students with the same informed matriculation goal.

4. *ESL and basic skills completion.* The ratio of the number of students who complete a degree-applicable course after having completed the final ESL or basic skills course.

5. *Transfer rate.** The ratio of the number of new students who earn six or more transferable units during their first college year and who also stated at entry their intent to transfer, to the number of students who transfer after one or more (up to eight) years.

*Definition endorsed by the Intersegmental Coordinating Council.

APPENDIX C

System Activities

Within the constraints of available resources in the Chancellor's Office, the Board of Governors directs the Chancellor, as outlined in this section, to develop a systemwide student equity plan; to evaluate fiscal incentives and adequacy of support for student equity; to examine the appropriateness of existing student equity-related statutes and regulations; to undertake other appropriate activities in support of student equity goals.

A. System Plan

The Chancellor, working with the consultation groups, shall prepare a student equity plan for the system, and the plan shall include, among other appropriate sections:

- Systemwide goals
- Proposals for changes in regulations and statutes based, in part, on recommendations from districts that have identified changes that would promote student equity
- Proposals for services needed by the districts from the Chancellor's Office based, in part, on a review of the districts' student equity plans
- Identification of groups, in addition to those already specified as underrepresented, which may need special attention and proposals for special programs to assist those groups
- A means to report annually on the achievement of the system as a whole and the individual colleges and districts in the following areas: access, retention, degree and certificate completion, ESL and basic skills completion, and transfer for each of the historically underrepresented groups.

B. Fiscal Mechanisms

- The Chancellor, working with the consultation groups, shall consider various options for providing financial or other effective incentives to districts that make significant progress toward equity.

- The Chancellor, working with the consultation groups, shall consider requesting funds through the State budget process to augment existing student equity-focused categorical programs or to obtain new funding for innovative or special projects.

C. Statutes

Existing law should be reviewed, working with the consultation groups, to determine if there are requirements within State or federal statutes that if changed would foster student equity activities or that constitute institutional barriers to student equity. Proposed statutes should receive the same review.

D. Regulations

Working with the consultation groups, all regulations and State program guidelines should be reviewed to determine if appropriate priority is given to fostering student equity or if the regulations or guidelines contain unintended institutional barriers to student equity.

F. Technical Assistance

The Chancellor, working with the consultation groups, shall develop models and processes to accomplish the following:

- Developing strategies for making all groups comfortable and welcome on campus, including the development of staff codes of conduct which support a receptive campus climate; and programs that foster sensitivity to all individuals, such as staff development and interaction seminars among students, faculty, and staff

- Improving processes at the State and local levels for handling cases of harassment or differential treatment

- Developing programs that increase contact between students and faculty outside the classroom, such as mentoring, tutoring, counseling, student activities, and advising

- Developing programs that encourage, recognize, and reward faculty who take additional courses in their discipline that are about women, ethnic and religious minorities, or nonwestern civilizations or in teaching methodologies determined to be particularly effective with students from underrepresented groups

- Developing methods for the effective distribution of bibliographies and materials in other media of a multi-cultural or sensitivity-encouraging nature, including where these materials are available for purchase or loan

- Assisting campuses in evaluating the receptivity of their campus environment to students from underrepresented groups. This effort could include use of the "Campus Climate" survey developed by the California Postsecondary Education Commission

- In cooperation with one or more universities, planning for a series of courses for all appropriate discipline areas to provide upper-division and graduate instruction to community college faculty on issues and materials by and about women, ethnic and religious minorities, and nonwestern civilizations

- Providing assistance in the development and implementation of a multi-cultural curriculum through appropriate local curriculum review

G. Accreditation

The Chancellor should work with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to review how the accreditation standards and process could further strengthen district and college efforts to attain student equity.